



# PERSONAL SECURITY HANDBOOK



**How You and Your Family Can  
Minimize Risks to Personal Safety**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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## ■ Introduction

Security Measures Increase .....	2
Federal Criminal Cases Change .....	2
Practical Steps Reduce Risk .....	3

## ■ I Don't Want To Talk About It!

It's Up to You to Take the First Step! .....	4
"On the Other Hand..." .....	5

## ■ House, Home, and Family

Tips for the Family at Home .....	6
Be Suspicious .....	6
Telephone Security .....	7
When Going Out .....	7
Special Precautions for Children .....	7
Suspicious Packages or Mail .....	8
Domestic Employees .....	8
Security Precautions When You're Away .....	9
Residential Security .....	9

## ■ Ground Transportation Security

Vehicles .....	10
Auto Maintenance .....	10
On the Road .....	11
Commercial Buses, Trains & Taxis .....	12

## ■ Traveling Defensively By Air

Making Travel Arrangements .....	13
Personal Identification .....	13
Precautions at the Airport .....	13
Actions if Attacked .....	14
Actions if Hijacked .....	14

## ■ Family Data

Personal Information .....	15
Spouse .....	16
Child(ren) .....	17
Vehicles .....	18

## ■ Internet Security, Guidelines for Families

Make It a Family Rule To... ..	19
Children's Rules for Online Safety .....	inside back cover

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Ensuring the security of the federal courts and the safety of its personnel has always been a priority responsibility of the Marshals Service. The challenges faced in meeting that responsibility, however, have never been greater than they are today.

## SECURITY MEASURES INCREASE

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Nevertheless, we have succeeded in providing a safe and secure environment for the operation of the federal courts through the development of effective court security techniques. The use of magnetometers, closed-circuit television monitors, electronic alarm systems and other devices within the court facilities—in addition to well trained and alert security personnel—have resulted in the confiscation of thousands of weapons at the entrance to courthouses, the interception of explosives and other harmful devices, and the avoidance of physical assault on judges and prosecutors.

In addition, the Marshals Service has established a Duty Desk whose mission is to provide an immediate assessment of the validity of any threat and, in cooperation with the Service's Analytical Support Unit, design an appropriate protective response.

## FEDERAL CRIMINAL CASES CHANGE

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The volume and violent nature of criminal cases brought into the federal justice system has escalated dramatically in recent years. They include international terrorists, major drug traffickers, and kingpins of organized crime. The number of acts of violence and reported threats to court officials has also increased significantly. Consequently, the need for prudent measures to ensure the safety of judges and other participants in the judicial process is imperative.

While this ***Personal Security Handbook*** was designed primarily for the use of members of the federal judiciary and other court personnel, it offers a variety of security suggestions that can increase the personal security of any public official or private citizen.

## PRACTICAL STEPS REDUCE RISK

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Please bear in mind that the security measures employed by the Marshals Service at federal court facilities, or in response to a specific threat situation, are not substitutes for the practical steps an individual can and should take to minimize personal risk outside the workplace. You are encouraged to consider and adopt these suggestions and to share them with other members of your family.



*The potential danger associated with the life of a public official or law enforcement officer is an unpleasant topic of conversation among family and friends. But avoiding the subject does not lessen the potential for harm. Indeed, a frank discussion and thoughtful consideration of practical measures that will increase your safety and that of your family members can reduce your—and their—vulnerability to acts of violence. It also can lead to steps that will help save lives in the unlikely event that an attempt to harm you or your family should actually occur.*

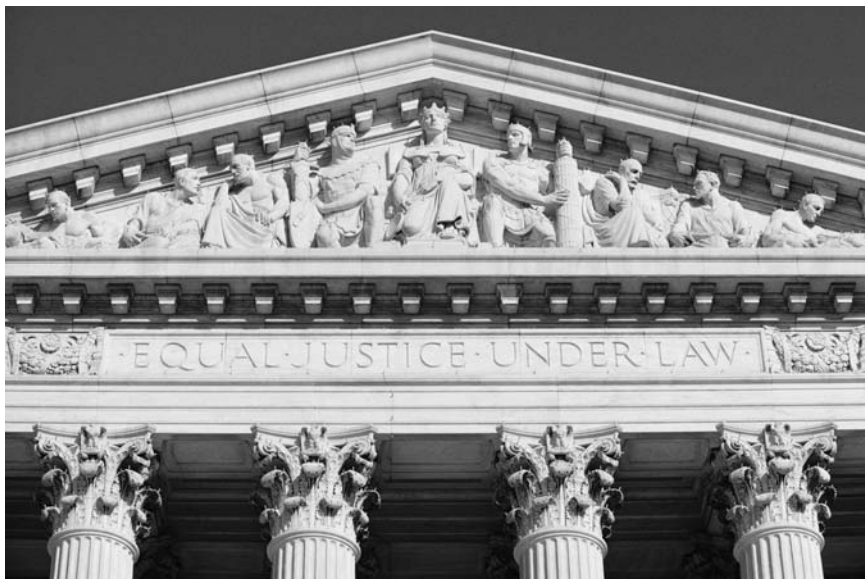
*Providing for the security of the federal courts and the protection of judges, court officials, witnesses, and jurors is the principal mission of the United States Marshals Service. This means ensuring security within the courtroom itself, as well as personal protection for judicial officers and others away from the court facilities when warranted. **However, the adoption of certain practical procedures in personal and family routines is the most important element in personal security.***

## **It's UP TO YOU TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP!**

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Familiarize your family with the necessary protective measures and techniques in this handbook. Review these measures periodically. Ensure that everyone in the family knows what to do in an emergency. **And**, when anything suspicious occurs that might suggest a threat to your safety, call the U.S. Marshal's office and/or local police. Let **them** decide "it's nothing to worry about."





## **“ON THE OTHER HAND...”**

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Let's put this matter of “threats” in perspective. The potential for violence to you or your family is an important subject. When the rare incidents of assaults on public officials or attempts at intimidation actually occur, they attract tremendous attention from the news media. As a result, violence in one form or another seems to be everywhere.

As a practical matter, you are hundreds of times more likely to be injured from a fall at home or on the tennis court, or to be killed in an automobile accident than to ever be involved in a work-related assault or hostage situation. The chances of you or your family becoming victims of that sort are very slight—and you can reduce the risk even further.

This handbook attempts to tell you how.

*Many of the suggestions that follow are very basic and may already be part of your normal routine. However, it may not be correct to assume that all of your family members are similarly conscious of the need for personal security practices. Be on the safe side. Go over these points with them so that they can feel confident that both they and you are taking good care of yourselves.*

## TIPS FOR THE FAMILY AT HOME

- Restrict the possession of house keys. Change locks if keys are lost or stolen and when moving into a previously occupied residence.
- Lock all entrances at night, including the garage. Keep the house locked, even if you are at home.
- Personally destroy all envelopes or other items that reflect your name and official position.
- Develop friendly relationships with your neighbors.
- Arrange for an unlisted home telephone number (so that your address will not be too readily accessible).

## BE SUSPICIOUS

- Be alert to public utility crews or any workmen requesting access to your residence; check their identification through a peep-hole before allowing entry.
- Be alert to peddlers and strangers.
- Write down license numbers of suspicious vehicles; note descriptions of occupants.
- Refuse unordered packages.
- Never eat candy or other foodstuffs that are delivered to your residence from an unknown source. If such items are received, notify the U.S. Marshal or local police.
- Treat with suspicion any inquiries about the whereabouts or activities of other family members.
- Report all suspicious activity to the U.S. Marshals Service and/or local police.

## TELEPHONE SECURITY

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- Post emergency numbers on the telephone:
  - ***U.S. Marshal***
  - ***Local Police***
  - ***Fire Department***
  - ***Hospital***
- Do not answer your telephone with your name or official title.
- Report all threatening phone calls to the U.S. Marshal's office.

## WHEN GOING OUT

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- Avoid high risk areas and vary movements so as not to be predictable.
- Try to be inconspicuous when using public transportation and facilities. Dress, conduct, and mannerisms should not attract attention.
- Avoid public demonstrations; do not be curious.

## SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS FOR CHILDREN

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- Instruct children to keep doors and windows locked, and never to admit strangers.
- Teach children how to contact the police or a neighbor in an emergency.
- If it is necessary to leave children at home, keep the house well lighted and notify the neighbors.
- Know where your children are all the time—morning, noon and night.

### ***Advise your children to:***

- Never leave home without advising their parents where they will be and who will accompany them.
- Travel in pairs or groups.
- Walk along busy streets and avoid isolated areas.
- Use play areas where recreational activities are supervised by responsible adults and where police protection is readily available.
- Refuse automobile rides from strangers and refuse to accompany strangers anywhere on foot...even if the strangers say mom or dad sent them or said it was okay.
- Report immediately to the nearest person of authority (teacher, police) anyone who attempts to molest or annoy them.



## SUSPICIOUS PACKAGES OR MAIL

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Suspicious characteristics to look for include:

- An unusual or unknown place of origin.
- No return address.
- An excessive amount of postage.
- Oily stain on the package.
- Wires or strings protruding from or attached to an item.
- Incorrect spelling on a package label.
- Differing return address and postmark.
- Appearance of foreign-style handwriting.
- Peculiar odor. (Many explosives smell like shoe polish or almonds.)
- Unusual heaviness or lightness.
- Uneven balance or shape.

- Springiness in the top, bottom, or sides.
- Never cut tape, strings, or other wrappings on a suspected package. Never immerse a suspected letter or package in water. Either of these actions could cause an explosive device to detonate.
- Never touch or move a suspicious package or letter.
- Report any suspicious packages or mail to the U.S. Marshal's office or local police immediately.

## DOMESTIC EMPLOYEES

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- Conduct a thorough review of references.
- Inform employees about security responsibilities.
- Instruct them as to which phone or other means of communication to use in an emergency.

## SECURITY PRECAUTIONS WHEN YOU'RE AWAY

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- Leave the house with a lived-in look.
- Stop deliveries or direct them to a neighbor's home.
- Don't leave notes on doors.
- Don't hide keys outside the house.
- Use a timer to turn lights on and off at varying times and locations.
- Leave a radio on. (Best with a timer.)
- Hide valuables.
- Notify the police or a trusted neighbor of your absence.



## RESIDENTIAL SECURITY

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### *Exterior grounds:*

- Do not put your name on the outside of your residence or mailbox.
- Have good lighting.
- Control vegetation to eliminate hiding places.

### *Entrances and exits should have:*

- Solid doors with deadbolt locks.
- One way peep-holes in doors.
- Bars and locks on skylights.
- Equip glass doors and ground floor windows with interior release mechanisms that are not reachable from outside.

### *Interior features:*

- Alarm and intercom systems.
- Fire extinguishers.
- Medical and first-aid equipment.

### *Other desirable features:*

- A clear view of approaches.
- More than one access road.
- Off-street parking.



*Many of the cautions noted in connection with travel, both local and international, may strike the reader as too obvious; nothing more than common sense. Other points may seem "extreme"—and, indeed, they are. You are unlikely to ever need to "jump a curb" at 35 miles per hour or "belly crawl" on the floor of an airport. But the purpose of this booklet is to inform the reader of a broad range of personal security considerations so that you can avoid unnecessary risk and deal knowledgeably with a dangerous situation if that should become necessary.*

*Criminal and terrorist acts against individuals usually occur outside the home and after the individual's habits have been established. Your most predictable habit is the route of travel from home to office or to commonly frequented local facilities.*

## VEHICLES

- Do not use "vanity" plates that identify you by name or official position.
- Do not have your name or official title displayed at your office parking place.

## AUTO MAINTENANCE

- Keep vehicle in good repair. You don't want it to fail when you need it most.
- Keep gas tank at least 1/2 full at all times.
- Park in well-lighted areas.
- Always lock your car...even when it's outside your house.
- Don't leave it on the street overnight, if possible.
- Never get out without checking for suspicious persons. If in doubt, drive away.
- Leave only the ignition key with parking attendants.
- Don't allow entry to the trunk unless you're there to watch.
- Never leave garage doors open or unlocked.
- Use a remote garage door opener if available. Enter and exit your car in the security of the garage.



## ON THE ROAD

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- Before leaving buildings to get into your vehicle, check the surrounding area to determine if anything of a suspicious nature exists. Display the same wariness before exiting your vehicle.
- Before entering vehicles, check for suspicious objects on the seats and floor.
- Guard against the establishment of routines by varying times, routes, and modes of travel.
- Avoid isolated roads and dark alleys.
- Know locations of safe havens along routes of routine travel.
- Habitually ride with seatbelts buckled, doors locked, and windows closed.
- Do not allow your vehicle to be boxed in; maintain a minimum 8-foot interval between you and the vehicle in front and avoid the inner lanes.
- Be alert while driving or riding.
- Know how to react if surveillance is suspected or confirmed.
- Circle the block for confirmation of surveillance.
- Do not stop or take other actions which could lead to confrontation.
- Do not drive home if you think you are being followed.
- Get a description of car and its occupants.
- Go to the nearest safe haven.
- Report incident to the U.S. Marshal's office and/or local police.

### ***Recognize events that can signal the start of an attack, such as:***

- Cyclist falling in front of your car.
- Flagman or workman stopping your car.
- Fake police checkpoint.
- Disabled vehicle/accident victims on the road.
- Unusual detours.
- An accident in which your car is struck.
- Cars or pedestrian traffic that box you in.
- Sudden activity or gunfire.
- Without subjecting yourself, passengers, or pedestrians to harm, try to draw attention to your car by sounding the horn.
- Put another vehicle between you and your pursuer.
- Execute immediate turn and escape, jump curb if necessary at a 30 - 45 degree angle, 35 mph maximum.
- Ram blocking vehicle if necessary.

## COMMERCIAL BUSES, TRAINS & TAXIS

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- Vary mode of commercial transportation.
- Select busy stops.
- Don't always use the same taxi company.
- Don't let someone you don't know direct you to a specific cab.
- Ensure that the face of the driver and the picture on the license are the same.
- Try to travel with a companion.
- If possible, specify the route you want the taxi to follow.



Air travel, particularly to foreign countries, poses security problems different from those of ground transportation. Here too, simple precautions can reduce the hazards of an assault.

## MAKING TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

- Don't use title or office address on tickets, travel documents, or hotel reservations.
- Select the window seat for more protection. Aisle seats would be closer to a hijacker's movements up and down the aisle.
- Rear seats offer more protection since they are farther from the center of hostile action, which is often near the cockpit.
- Seats at an emergency exit may provide an opportunity to escape.

## PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION

- Consider use of a tourist passport, if you have one, with necessary visas providing it's allowed by the country you are visiting.
- If you use a tourist passport, consider placing your government passport, official ID, and related documents in your checked luggage, not in your wallet or briefcase.

- If you must carry these documents on your person, select a hiding place onboard the aircraft where you could "ditch" them in case of a hijacking.
- Ensure luggage tags don't show your official title.

## PRECAUTIONS AT THE AIRPORT

- Look for nervous passengers who maintain eye contact with others from a distance. Note behavior not consistent with that of others in the area.
- No matter where you are in the terminal, identify objects suitable for cover in the event of attack. Pillars, trash cans, luggage, large planters, counters, and furniture can provide protection.
- Avoid secluded areas that provide concealment for attackers.
- Be aware of unattended baggage anywhere in the terminal.
- Report suspicious activity to airport security personnel.



## ACTIONS IF ATTACKED

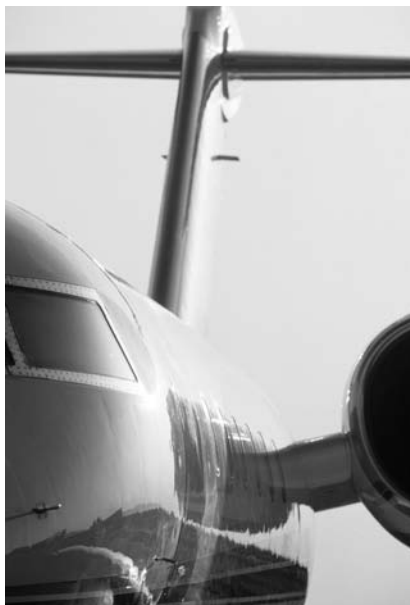
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- Dive for cover. Do not run.
- If you must move, belly crawl or roll. Stay low to the ground, using available cover.
- Place arms and elbows next to your rib cage to protect your lungs, heart, and chest. Cover your ears and head with your hands to protect neck arteries, ears and skull.
- Responding security personnel will not be able to recognize you from attackers. Do not attempt to assist them in any way. Lie still until told to get up.

## ACTIONS IF HIJACKED

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- Remain calm and cooperate with your captors.
- Be aware that all hijackers may not reveal themselves at the same time. A lone hijacker may be used to draw out security personnel for neutralization by other hijackers.
- Surrender your tourist passport in response to a general demand for identification.
- Discretely dispose of any U.S. affiliated documents.
- Don't offer any information; confirm your official position if directly confronted with the fact. Be prepared to explain that you always travel on your personal passport and that no deceit was intended.
- Don't draw attention to yourself through sudden body movements, verbal remarks, or hostile looks.
- Prepare yourself for possible verbal and physical abuse, lack of food, drink and sanitary conditions.
- If permitted, read, sleep, or write to occupy your time.
- Discretely observe your captors and get a thorough physical description. Include voice patterns and language distinctions, as well as clothing and unique physical characteristics.
- Cooperate with any rescue attempt. Lie on the floor until told to rise.



*Police agencies need timely and accurate information to effectively respond to threat situations. Keep this data on hand, ready to give to the U.S. Marshal and other police authorities.*

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Build: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Hairline: \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses (Prescription): \_\_\_\_\_

Color of Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Color of Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguishing Marks: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages Spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Requirements or Problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Medication Required and Time Intervals: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Provide Three Signature Samples:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Attach two photographs, one full length front view  
and one full length side view.

**SPOUSE**

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Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_

Official Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Build: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Hairline: \_\_\_\_\_ Glasses (Prescription): \_\_\_\_\_

Color of Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Color of Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguishing Marks: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages Spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Requirements or Problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Medication Required and Time Intervals: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Provide Three Signature Samples:

Attach two photographs, one full length front view  
and one full length side view.

# CHILD

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Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School or Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Build: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Color of Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Color of Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Glasses (Prescription): \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguishing Marks: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages Spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Requirements or Problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Medication Required and Time Intervals: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach two photographs, one full length front view  
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Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nickname: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School or Employer: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ SSN: \_\_\_\_\_

Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Height: \_\_\_\_\_ Build: \_\_\_\_\_ Weight: \_\_\_\_\_

Color of Hair: \_\_\_\_\_ Color of Eyes: \_\_\_\_\_

Glasses (Prescription): \_\_\_\_\_

Distinguishing Marks: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Citizenship: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages Spoken: \_\_\_\_\_

Medical Requirements or Problems: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Medication Required and Time Intervals: \_\_\_\_\_

Attach two photographs, one full length front view  
and one full length side view.

# VEHICLE #1

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Make and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: \_\_\_\_\_

License/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Distinctive Markings: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Doors (Number): \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

# VEHICLE #1

---

Make and Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Model: \_\_\_\_\_

Style: \_\_\_\_\_

License/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Distinctive Markings: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Doors (Number): \_\_\_\_\_

Vehicle ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*By taking responsibility for your children's online computer use, parents can greatly minimize any potential risks while online.*

## MAKE IT A FAMILY RULE TO...

- Never give out identifying information – home address, school name or telephone number – in a public message such as chat or bulletin boards, and be sure you're dealing with someone who both you and your child know and trust before giving it out via e-mail. Think carefully before revealing any personal information such as age, marital status, or financial information. Consider using a pseudonym or unlisting your child's name if your service allows it.
- Get to know the services your child uses. If you don't know how to log on, get your child to show you. Find out what types of information it offers and whether there are ways for parents to block out objectionable material.
- Never allow a child to arrange a face-to-face meeting with another computer user without parental permission. If a meeting is arranged, make the first one in a public spot, and be sure to accompany your child.
- Never respond to messages or bulletin board items that are suggestive, obscene, belligerent, threatening, or make you feel uncomfortable. Encourage your children to tell you if they encounter such messages. If you or your child receives a message that is harassing, of a sexual nature, or threatening, forward a copy of the message to your service provider and ask for their assistance.
- Should you become aware of the transmission, use, or viewing of child pornography while online, immediately report this to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children by calling **1-800-843-5678**. You should also notify your online service.
- Remember that people online may not be who they seem. Because you can't see or even hear the person it would be easy for someone to misrepresent him or herself. Thus, someone indicating that "she" is a "12-year-old girl" could in reality be a 40-year-old man.



- Remember that everything you read online may not be true. Any offer that's "too good to be true" probably is. Be very careful about any offers that involve your coming to a meeting or having someone visit your house.
- Set reasonable rules and guidelines for computer use by your children. (see "Children's Rules for Online Safety" on the inside back cover as a sample.) Discuss these rules and post them near the computer as a reminder. Remember to monitor their compliance with these rules, especially when it comes to the amount of time your children spend on the computer. A child or teenager's excessive use of online services or bulletin boards, especially late at night, may be a clue that there is a potential problem.
- Be sure to make this a family activity. Consider keeping the computer in a family room rather than the child's bedroom. Get to know their "online friends" just as you get to know all of their other friends.



# Children's Rules for Online Safety\*

I will not give out personal information such as my address, telephone number, parents' work address/telephone number, or the name and location of my school without my parents' permission.

I will tell my parents right away if I come across any information that makes me feel uncomfortable.

I will never agree to get together with someone I "meet" online without first checking with my parents. If my parents agree to the meeting, I will be sure that it is in a public place and bring my mother or father along.

I will never send a person my picture or anything else without first checking with my parents.

I will not respond to any messages that are mean or in any way make me feel uncomfortable. It is not my fault if I get a message like that. If I do I will tell my parents right away so that they can contact the online service.

I will talk with my parents so that we can set up rules for going online. We will decide upon the time of day that I can be online, the length of time I can be online, and appropriate areas for me to visit. I will not access other areas or break these rules without their permission.



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